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August 2003

Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration
Draft Environmental Impact Statement



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Medford District Office
Butte Falls Resource Area

August 2003

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Elk Creek Watershed Restoration
Draft Environmental Impact
Statement



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

BLM/OR/WA/PL-03/036+1792
Timbered

Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Draft Environmental Impact Statement

August 2003

Prepared by:

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Medford District Office
Butte Falls Resource Area



Lance E. Nimmo
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United States Department of the Interior

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JUN 2003

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1824(OR115)
DEIS Comments
Timbered Rock
B5380(JW:tp)

Dear Reader:

We welcome your participation in evaluating the proposed alternatives for restoration projects within the Elk Creek Watershed and economic recovery of fire-killed trees (salvage) in the Timbered Rock Fire area as described in this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The Timbered Rock Fire started on July 13, 2002 and burned approximately 27,000 acres, of which about 12,000 acres are administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Another 11,000 acres are private industrial forestlands, about 600 acres are managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers, 2,600 acres are managed by the US Forest Service, Rogue River National Forest, and the remaining acres are in private ownership and managed for various uses.

We are particularly interested in comments that address one or more of the following: (1) how well the Preferred Alternative meets the Purpose and Need; (2) new information that would affect the analysis; (3) possible improvements in the analysis; and (4) suggestions for improving or clarifying the proposed management direction (alternatives). Specific comments are most useful. BLM will respond to comments addressing the adequacy of the DEIS in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). This DEIS will be published on the Medford District BLM web site, <http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford/TimbrockEIS>.

Public comments received during public scoping were considered in identifying and addressing issues during the development of alternatives, there are six action alternatives proposed in this DEIS. Also, considered was information supplied by State and local governments, other federal agencies, and data developed by BLM staff. The alternatives were designed to implement a number of restoration projects that protect, maintain, restore, and/or enhance late-successional characteristics in the Elk Creek Watershed and to address salvage of trees killed by the Timbered Rock Fire.

Alternative G is identified as the Preferred Alternative. Although, a Preferred Alternative is identified, it is recognized that parts of the other alternatives would also meet management goals or possibly new information will be identified and, as a result, dialogue and comments received on this draft plan will be heavily relied upon in identifying a new Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The 60-day formal public review shall begin when the Environmental Protection Agency publishes a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the DEIS in the *Federal Register*. In order to be considered in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, written comments must be received within the formal comment period. The official comment closing date will be announced in a news release and on the Medford District web site.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Medford District Office; 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, Oregon during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday through Friday, except holidays. **If you wish to withhold your name and/or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment.** Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

BLM will discuss the various management alternatives and answer questions pertaining to the Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration DEIS in public meetings. Meeting locations, dates and time will be published in the *Medford Mail Tribune* and *Upper Rogue Independent* newspapers and on the Medford District BLM web site, <http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford/TimbrockEIS>. A news release will be made available to the local media.

Please keep this copy of the DEIS and enclosed maps as information provided may be referred to, but not reprinted, in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Comments will be accepted by any of the following:

FAX: 541-770-6634

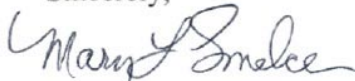
E-mail: or110treis@or.blm.gov

**Mail: Bureau of Land Management
Comments, Timbered Rock DEIS
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504**

Please note: Your options to appeal or protest the final decisions in the FEIS may be limited if you have not participated in this process or commented on the DEIS.

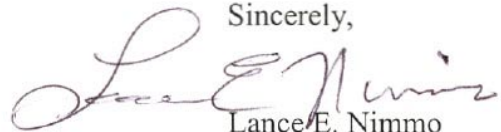
We invite you to participate in this process and appreciate any comments you may have so that they may be considered in the development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,



Mary L. Smelcer
Acting District Manager
Medford District BLM

Sincerely,



Lance E. Nimmo
Butte Falls Field Manager
Medford District BLM

Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Draft Environmental Impact Statement

1. Responsible Agency: United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

2. Draft (X) Final ()

3. Administrative Action (X) Legislative Action ()

4. Abstract: The Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) considers seven alternatives to analyze possible salvage opportunities resulting from the Timbered Rock Fire and proposed restoration projects designed to move resource conditions closer to the desired future conditions identified in the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP), Elk Creek Watershed Analysis (WA), and South Cascades Late-Successional Reserve Assessment (LSRA). In 1994, the NFP designated the Federal lands (85,424 acres) within the Elk Creek Watershed as Late-Successional Reserve (LSR). The Butte Falls Resource Area, Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers 23,866 acres within the Elk Creek LSR.

A catastrophic fire occurred within the Elk Creek Watershed in 2003. The Timbered Rock Fire burned with varying degrees of intensity across 27,000 acres of mixed Federal, private, and commercial forest lands. About 12,000 acres of BLM-administered land, primarily within the Elk Creek LSR were burned. Due to the Timbered Rock Fire, the BLM proposed to take two actions: implementation of restoration projects within the Elk Creek Watershed and economic recovery of fire-killed trees (salvage).

Two types of salvage, area and roadside, are discussed in Alternatives C through G. Alternatives A (No Action) and B propose no salvage. Alternatives C through G were designed using specific guidance relating to post-fire salvage and/or Late-Successional Reserve guidelines. Included in Alternative G is research to study the effects of various snag retention levels on wildlife species. Research could occur in any alternative.

Four levels of restoration projects are proposed in the six action alternatives (B-G): focused, moderate, extensive, and focused within the fire perimeter only. Restoration varies by the scope of the projects, intensity of the treatments, and location of the treatments. Restoration projects are located within the Timbered Rock Fire perimeter and outside the fire area. Most projects are located within the Elk Creek Watershed. A reforestation study is included which would evaluate a variety of planting densities, species, and follow-up treatments in salvaged and unsalvaged areas. This study could occur in any alternative.

Alternative G is the BLM Preferred Alternative.

Release of this draft EIS begins a 60-day comment period.

5. Comments must be received by September 30, 2003.

6. Date the Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Draft Environmental Impact Statement made available to the Environmental Protection Agency and the public:

7. For further information, contact:

Jean Williams, Co-Team Lead
John Bergin, Co-Team Lead
Bureau of Land Management
Medford District Office
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504
Telephone: (541) 840-9989 or (541) 944-6620

User's Guide

The Timbered Rock Fire Salvage and Elk Creek Watershed Restoration Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is divided into six sections: Summary, Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 2 (Alternatives), Chapter 3 (Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences), Chapter 4 (Consultation and Coordination), and Appendices. The following is an overview of these sections to assist in the review of the document and in understanding the planning process.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 provides the introduction to the plan. It defines the purpose (objectives) and need for the plan and provides a description of the planning area. The issues or concerns identified through scoping and the planning process are included. Also included is an explanation of the relationship of this plan to existing laws, regulations, policies, and other plans.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 describes the range of alternatives, including the No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and the BLM's Preferred Alternative (Alternative G). The seven alternatives propose a variety of management actions in order to address the plan objectives and the underlying need for this planning effort.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 combines the affected environment and the environmental consequences into one chapter. The affected environment includes the pre- and post-fire conditions for the physical, biological, social, and economic resources in the planning area. The resources that would be affected by or would affect the proposed management actions are emphasized. Chapter 3 also analyzes the environmental consequences of implementing each alternative as compared to the existing conditions.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 identifies the specialists and supporting technical specialists involved in the preparation of this plan. A summary of the public involvement process and a list of the agencies, organizations, and individuals who were consulted in the DEIS process are included.

Maps

A map packet is included with this document. It contains folded maps of the six action alternatives, Alternatives B-G. At the back of the document are attached four z-fold maps. Maps charts, and tables are also included throughout the document.

Acronyms

BAER – Burned Area Emergency Response
BFRA – Butte Falls Resource Area
BLM – Bureau of Land Management
BMP – Best Management Practices
CWA – Clean Water Act
CWD – Coarse Woody Debris
DBH – Diameter at Breast Height
DEQ – Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
DMA – Designated Management Agency
ECA – Equivalent Clearcut Acres
EFH – Essential Fish Habitat
ESA – Endangered Species Act
ESRP – Emergency Stabilization/Rehabilitation Plan
FEMAT – Federal Ecosystem Management Assessment Team
FMZ – Fuel Management Zone
FOI – Forest Operations Inventory
FPA – Oregon Forestry Practices Act
FTE – Full Time Equivalent
GIS – Geographic Information System
JACTMA – Jackson Access and Cooperative Travel Management Area
LSOG – Late-Successional/Old Growth
LSR – Late-Successional Reserve
LSRA – South Cascades Late-Successional Reserve Assessment
LWD – Large Woody Debris
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act
NFP – Northwest Forest Plan
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRF – Nesting/Roosting/Foraging
O&C – Oregon and California Railroad
OAR – Oregon Administrative Rules
ODF – Oregon Department of Forestry
ODFW – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
ONHP – Oregon Natural Heritage Program
OSHA – Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PDF – Project Design Feature
PIF – Partners in Flight
RMP – Medford District Resource Management Plan
ROD – Record of Decision
ROS – Rain-on-Snow
S&M – Survey and Manage
SONC – Southern Oregon/Northern California
T&E – Threatened and Endangered Species
TEP – Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed plant species
TMO – Transportation Management Objectives
TSZ – Transient Snow Zone
USACE – United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
USDI – United States Department of the Interior
USFS – United States Forest Service
USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VRM – Visual Resource Management
WA – Elk Creek Watershed Analysis
WQRP – Water Quality Restoration Plan

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